AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of determining the subjective quality of an audio-visual stimulus, comprising:

measuring the actual synchronisation errors between the audio and visual elements of the stimulus;

identifying characteristics of audio and visual cues in the stimulus that are indicative of the significance of synchronization errors;

generating a measure of subjective quality from said synchronisation errors and characteristics;

analysing the audio and visual elements of the stimulus for the presence of said characteristic features indicative of the significance of synchronisation errors; and

modifying the measure of subjective quality derived from the synchronisation errors and characteristics according to whether said characteristic features are present.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the characteristics of the audio and visual cues are used to generate one or more synchronisation error tolerance values.

3. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the audio-visual stimulus is monitored for occurrences of synchronisation errors exceeding said tolerance values.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 3, wherein the means generating the stimulus is controlled to maintain the synchronisation in a predetermined relationship with the said tolerance values.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 4, wherein the resulting measure of subjective quality is used to control the operation of an avatar animation process.

6. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for determining the subjective quality of an audio-visual stimulus, comprising:

means for measuring the actual synchronisation errors between the audio and visual elements of the stimulus;

means for identifying characteristics of audio and visual elements of the stimulus that are indicative of the significance of synchronisation errors;

means for generating a measure of subjective quality from said synchronisation errors and characteristics;

means for analysing the audio and visual elements of the stimulus for the presence of said characteristic features indicative of the significance of synchronisation errors; and

means for modifying the measure of subjective quality derived from the synchronisation errors and characteristics according to whether said characteristic features are present.

7. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the means for identifying cue characteristics generates one or more synchronisation error tolerance values.

8. (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 7, comprising means for monitoring the audio-visual stimulus for occurrences of synchronisation errors exceeding said tolerance values.

9. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 8, comprising means for controlling the means generating the stimulus to maintain the synchronisation in a predetermined relationship with the said tolerance values.

10. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising animation process means controlled by the subjective quality measurement means to generate an animated image.

11. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the audio-visual stimulus is a "talking-head."

12. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the audio-visual stimulus is a "talking-head."